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PATENT SPECIFICATION

DRAWINGS ATTACHED

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COMPLETE SPECIFICATION

Improvements in or relating to Welding of
Polytetrafluoroethylene

We, BTR INDUSTRIES LIMITED, a British Company, of Herga House, Vincent Square, London, S.W.1, do hereby declare the invention, for which we pray that a patent may be granted to us, and the method by which it is to be performed, to be particularly described in and by the following statement:—

The invention relates to the welding together of two bodies of polytetrafluoroethylene.

The invention provides the method of securing together two bodies of polytetrafluoroethylene which comprises the steps of supporting the bodies spaced apart a small distance, filling the space with compacted unsintered polytetrafluoroethylene powder and then heating the powder to above the sintering temperature of the powder.

In one form of the invention the powder is compacted *in situ* between the polytetrafluoroethylene bodies.

In another form of the invention the space is filled by a pre-formed member of compacted polytetrafluoroethylene powder, the member if necessary being further compacted into the space.

Preferably the powder is sintered under pressure. This pressure may, for example, be produced by natural expansion of the powder during the heating, between the supported polytetrafluoroethylene bodies.

The temperature to which the polytetrafluoroethylene powder is heated may be within the range of 620°F. to 930°F. and preferably from 680°F. to 750°F.

In a modified form of the method the polytetrafluoroethylene powder is replaced by fluorinated ethylene propylene powder which is heated to the sintering or melting temperature of the powder.

It is preferred to use the unsintered powder by itself but it is within the invention to incorporate in the powder a filler or pigment such as carbon black. When such an addition

is made, the proportion is preferably small, e.g. not greater than about 5% although larger proportions can be used.

A specific application of the method according to the invention will now be described by way of example and with reference to the accompanying drawing which shows, in section, one stage in the welding together of the ends of a lining and covering of polytetrafluoroethylene for a metal dip pipe.

In the drawing, the pipe 7 is of steel and is provided with a lining sleeve 6 and an outer cover sleeve 5, both of polytetrafluoroethylene. The ends of the two sleeves extend beyond the end, 8, of the steel pipe, and are welded together by the method of the invention.

The first step in the welding operation is to support the sleeves by a closely fitting inner metal tube 1 and a closely fitting outer tube 3. The space 2 between the two sleeves is then filled with unsintered polytetrafluoroethylene powder which is firmly compacted, by tamping, to exclude air. The tube 1 is then removed and replaced by a tube of slightly smaller outside diameter. For example, if the tube 7 has an internal diameter of 2 inches and the wall thickness of the lining sleeve 6 is about 0.060 inches, then the replacement tube may leave a clearance of about 0.030 inches from the lining sleeve, all round. The whole assembly is then placed in an oven and heated to a temperature above the sintering temperature of the powder, whereby the powder is caused to cohere and also to adhere to the two sleeves. During the heating step the powder expands within the space 2 and as a result is compressed between the support tubes 1 and 3 which improves the adhesion. The provision of the clearance limits the pressure by allowing limited separation of the sleeves to increase the space between them either before or during the heating. After removal from the oven and cooling, the extreme end of the polytetrafluoroethylene

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assembly is cut off (e.g. on the line X—X) to

produce a square end to the assembly.

The invention is not limited in its applica-

tions to tubular structures. It may, for in-

stance, be applied to the securing together of

sheets, slabs or blocks held apart, the gap being

filled with powdered polytetrafluoroethylene

which is subsequently sintered. Such an appli-

cation may be used for sealing the edges of

metal sheets faced with sheets of polytetra-

fluoroethylene.

Furthermore the invention is not limited

to filling the space with polytetrafluoroethy-

lene in powder form. It is within the invention

first to compress powder into a pre-formed

member of size and shape substantially to fill

the space (i.e. an annulus in the case of the

above example) and to insert this member into

one end of the tube in which, where the sleeves

extend beyond the tube, the lining is sup-

ported internally, the covering is supported

externally, the space between the sleeves corre-

sponding to the thickness of the metal tube

is filled with compacted unsintered polytetra-

fluoroethylene and powder and the whole is

heated to sinter the powder.

8. The modification of the method accord-

ing to any one of the preceding claims in

which the polytetrafluoroethylene powder is

replaced by fluorinated ethylene propylene

powder which is heated to the sintering or

melting temperature of the powder.

9. The method of securing together two

bodies of polytetrafluoroethylene substantially

as herein described.

10. The method of securing together the

ends of a lining and covering of polytetra-

fluoroethylene for a tube, substantially as here-

in, the accompanying drawing.

11. Two bodies of polytetrafluoroethylene

united by the method according to any one of

the preceding claims.

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Chartered Patent Agents,

Agents for the Applicants.

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COMPLETE SPECIFICATION

1 SHEET

*This drawing is a reproduction of
th Original on a reduced scale*

